

Message Text

SECRET

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E.O. 11652: XDGS-1
TAGS: PFOR FR UR PARM
SUBJECT: ELYSEE THOUGHTS ON SUBSTANCE POSSIBLE BREZHNEV
VISIT

REF: A) PARIS 28054; B) PARIS 21594

1. ASKED WHAT MIGHT BE RESULTS OF POSSIBLE BREZHNEV
VISIT TO FRANCE (REFTEL A), IN LIGHT OF SUBSTANTIVE
IMPASSE WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE DEVELOPED, ELYSEE STAFFER
(PROTECT THROUGHOUT) SAID THAT SOVIETS CONTINUE TO PRESS
HARD FOR FRENCH SUPPORT WITH RESPECT TO SOVIET DISARMA-
MENT OBJECTIVES. WE ARE TOLD ISSUE AGAIN CAME UP FORCE-
FULLY DURING TCHERVONENKO'S FIRST CALL ON GUIRINGAUD.

3. ALTHOUGH SOVIETS HAD EVIDENTLY HOPED TO USE RECENTLY
ANNOUNCED "ACCIDENTAL USE AGREEMENT" AS A FIRST STEP
TOWARD DEVELOPING A FRANCEO-SOVIET "SALT" PROCESS, ELYSEE
REMAINED "ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED" THAT HARD LINE GOF HAD
DRAWN IN KEEPING THAT AGREEMENT WITHIN NARROW TECHNICAL
LIMITS MUST BE MAINTAINED AGAINST ANY FURTHER SOVIET

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BILATERAL PROJECTS OF THIS SORT (REF B AND PREVIOUS). ON

OTHER HAND GOF WAS CONSCIOUS OF FACT THAT SUMMIT MEETINGS DO HAVE TO HAVE SOME RESULTS. CONSEQUENTLY CONCLUSION HAS BEEN REACHED TO "STUDY POSSIBILITIES" OF BEING "SOMEWHAT MORE FLEXIBLE" ON ONE OR MORE OF USSR'S MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT OBJECTIVES. SOURCE EMPHASIZED REPEATEDLY THAT NO DECISIONS TAKEN, HOWEVER.

3. SPECIFICALLY SOURCE SUGGESTED THAT MOST PROMISING AREA FOR MODEST FRENCH GESTURE MIGHT BE IN DIRECTION OF STATED SOVIET WISH TO HAVE FRENCH JOIN GENEVE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE. IN ADDITION TO PLEASING SOVIETS, ELYSEE NOW THINKS FRENCH PUBLIC ALSO WOULD BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO SUCH MOVE THAN AT EARLIER TIME. (COMMENT: THIS PROBABLY MEANS ELYSEE EXPECTS THIS WOULD ENHANCE GISCARD'S IMAGE WITH CENTRISTS AND MODERATE LEFT FAVORABLE TO DISARMAMENT.) ON OTHER HAND, ELYSEE IS AWARE THAT THIS WAS COMPLEX INTERNATIONAL QUESTION, INVOLVING LONGSTANDING ARRANGEMENTS (CHAIRMANSHIP ISSUE WAS NOT MENTIONED) AND THAT, IN ANY CASE, NO GREAT NEW SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS COULD BE EXPECTED FROM FRENCH PARTICIPATION.

4. SOURCE ALSO HINTED THAT SOMEWHAT GREATER FRENCH READINESS TO "EXAMINE" CERTAIN OTHER SOVIET DISARMAMENT PROJECTS MIGHT RESULT FROM CURRENT REFLECTIONS BUT REITERATED THAT TIGHTLY-HELD PROCESS OF RESTUDY JUST BEGUN.

5. AS TO OTHER POSSIBLE FRENCH GESTURES, SOURCE SAID THEY WERE VERY LIMITED OR NONEXISTENT. HE TENDED TO DOWNPLAY POSSIBILITY THAT GISCARD MIGHT MAKE BOLD MOVE IN DIRECTION OF WELCOMING ONE OR MORE OF BRZHNEV'S PROPOSED THREE CONFERENCES ON ENERGY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT, BUT DID NOT WHOLLY RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF SOME LIMITED MOVEMENT IN THIS FIELD.

6. IN STRICTLY BILATERAL FIELD, EVEN RESOLUTION OF CURRENT DIPLOMATIC "VISA WAR" SEEMS DIFFICULT, SINCE PONIA-TOWSKI NOT SO FAR INCLINED EXCEPT TWO SOVIET "DIPLOMATS" IN PARIS WHOM UK HAD KICKED OUT IN 1970.

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7. COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUSLY PREMATURE TO ASSESS WHAT GISCARD MIGHT DO AT SUMMIT WHOSE DATE NOT EVEN CLEARLY FIXED. ON OTHER HAND THIS ELYSEE SOURCE'S HINTS, WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCURATE AND HELPFUL IN THE PAST, ARE SUGGESTIVE OF DIRECTIONS HIGH-LEVEL FRENCH THINKING IS TAKING.
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